

MACAULAY'S TREATMENT OF IRISH HISTORY 211

One question which has excited much controversy is the action of the Irish Parliament in repealing the Act of Settlement of 1662 and restoring the heirs of all whose land had been forfeited by the government since 1641 to the possession of their estates, and passing a general bill of attainder against the Protestant landowners who had fled to England. It was vindicated by T. O. Davis in a series of historical papers contributed to the Nation about 1843, and republished in 1893 under the title of The Patriot Parliament of 1689, edited by C. G. Duffy. Lecky¹ apologises to some extent for the repeal of the Act of Settlement and complains that Macaulay, while severely condemning the Act of Attainder passed by the Irish Parliament, omits to mention that a similar bill of attainder was passed by the English House of Commons. But the cases are different. The English bill never became a law, as it did not pass the House of Lords. Moreover, while the Irish act attainted more than 2⁰⁰⁰ persons, the English bill proposed to attain only a score.² A detailed answer to Davis's vindication of this Parliament is contained in an essay upon it by T. Dunbar Ingram, entitled Two Chapters of Irish History (1888).

On these two questions of the repeal of the Act of Settlement and the attainder bill, James was opposed to the policy adopted by the Irish Parliament. He

knew that the
alienation of English feeling would make his
plan of using
Ireland as a stepping-stone for the recovery of
England
impossible. He expressed his disapproval, but
his feeble
opposition was overborne by Tyrconnel and
the Irish
nationalists, who sought the separation of
England and

¹W. E. H. Lecky, History of Ireland in the Eighteenth
Century (1892)»

i. "7-34-

²Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1689-1690, x (1889),
227-43.